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House of Representatives

The House met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. FRISA].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 13, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable DAN FRISA to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of May 12, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] for 5 minutes.

A LONG, LONG WAY TO GO

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, in the past 2 weeks Haiti has paid host to an impressive list of high-level visitors. The OAS journeyed there for its 25th annual meeting. A U.S. Presidential delegation traveled there for a look around. And, Secretary of State Warren Christopher joined the celebration for the first 370 graduates from the Civilian Police Training Center the United States created last December. These groups saw highway refurbishment projects, met with an optimistic electoral council, and some even stayed in the newly refurbished Club Med. If you

read the few articles regarding these visits, you get the impression that the elections are on line for June 25, and that come February 1996, there is no question that Haiti will be a self-sustaining, self-policing democracy under the direction of a new Haitian President.

I think we all hope that that will be the case. Especially since much of all this activity has been paid for by U.S. taxpayers. However, I want to urge my colleagues to take a closer look—to understand that, although some progress has been made, there is still a long, long way to go. Foremost on my long list of concerns is the question of whether or not the upcoming parliamentary elections will be fully free and fair and held in a stable environment where Haitian voters and candidates alike feel free to exercise their political prerogatives. Judging from the reports I have received, there are some serious problems. With elections less than 3 weeks away, the candidates list has yet to be finalized. This means that not only are voters and candidates confused about who will be on the ballot, but also that the ballots cannot go to print. The California printing company doing them has said they need 3.5 weeks to do that job—as it stands today they will be scrambling to get them printed in time for distribution to the 9,000 voting stations in Haiti before the June 25 election. Of course, because so many of the facilities used for voter registration have been damaged by frustrated crowds, the question of where these 9,000 voting stations will be remains open.

There are also signs of some serious problems with the voter registration process. A recent inventory found that nearly 1 million voter registration cards were missing. To date, the electoral council has only been able to locate 60,000 of them. In addition, despite the reopening of several registration centers in Port-au-Prince for a few

days the week before last—a cynic might say for the benefit of those high level delegations—we found that most stations closed in April due to lack of materials. This has left many Haitian voters unregistered, disgruntled, and disenchanted with the electoral process.

It should surprise no one that the single most important issue for most Haitians of all types is security. Anyone who has followed elections in Haiti knows that potential Haitian voters carry the memory of 1987 when voters were massacred as they went to the polls. For candidates across the spectrum from left to right, campaigning is done mostly by posters, rather than in person. Why? According to most of the candidates we have been in contact with, they are worried about personal security. The problem is that the combined impact of the dissolution of the Haitian military and the inability of the interim public security force to command the respect and trust of the Haitian people has left an authority vacuum. In fact, the IPSF continues to be afraid to patrol alone.

Despite the presence of the United Nations missions in towns and villages in all nine departments, if you ask them, most Haitians will tell you that having the troops there has made little difference in their security situation. Whether they are actually safer or not, they do not feel as if they are and that the new Haitian police force of 6,000 will not be ready to take over until early next year at the earliest. It also bears remembering that the parliamentary elections are only the first step—they will set the tenor for the Presidential elections later this year.

Mr. Speaker, it is way too soon to declare a victory in Haiti. In fact, I will not be ready to do that until Haiti has a new President, a new parliament, a working jurisprudence system, and an investment climate that invites investment, and is no longer a country under

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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